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Little Hocking water system records highest levels of C8

By Pamela Brust

Recent testing at one water distribution site in the Little Hocking Water Association revealed the highest C8 levels in that district.

DuPont Washington Works officials said variations in the C8 water levels in that district, while a concern for some, are still far below the safety levels of 150 parts per billion set by West Virginia/Ohio Environmental Protection Agency officials.

"The (C8 water) sampling is done quarterly. We receive the results an average of four to six weeks after the sampling. The wells have differing amounts of C8 in them; usually two or three are tested at the same time. They range from about 9 to 3, and mixed together, the result was 7.2 parts per billion, which is the highest we have ever had since the testing began back in December, January of 2002," said Robert Griffin, general manager of the Little Hocking Water Association.

The C8 "safety" level set by the West Virginia EPA and agreed upon by the Ohio EPA for C8 in water is 150 ppb.

"It is still a concern for us. It's a concern there is C8 in the water in the first place. It's our position, it shouldn't be there. The last samples in September and November were both the highest we had seen to date, it continues to go up fairly dramatically," Griffin said of the C8 levels in the water system.

The latest sampling results have been posted on the association's Web site at www.littlehockingwater.org, but Griffin said he's not sure how many of the district's customers are actually aware of the latest findings.



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In June, the district sent out a letter warning its customers of the need to be aware of the potential health risk posed by the chemical.

The 7.20 ppb C8 level was detected at a distribution site at Porterfield Community Building, the results of a Nov. 29, 2004 test.

At a recent press conference when officials released findings of DuPont employee testing for C8 blood levels, plant officials said DuPont has reduced C8 emissions by 98 percent. Their study of employees found there may be a link between exposure to the chemical and high cholesterol. A day later the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released preliminary findings that C8 may indeed pose a health hazard to humans and more research was necessary.

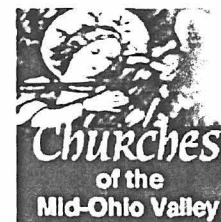
Ammonium perfluorooctanoate, often referred to as C8 has been used by DuPont at its Washington Works plant across the Ohio River from Washington County since the 1950s as part of its manufacturing process, which includes the production of Teflon.

A proposed settlement in a 2001 class action lawsuit is scheduled for a hearing on Feb. 28 in Wood County Circuit Judge George W. Hill's court. The civil suit stemmed from the release of release of C8 by the plant into area water supplies. The residents who originally filed the suit alleged they suffered health problems as a result of C8 contamination in area water supplies.

Little Hocking Water Association is a user-owned, nonprofit association incorporated May 23, 1968. It is the largest rural water system in Washington County with more than 4,000 water taps serving about 12,000 people.

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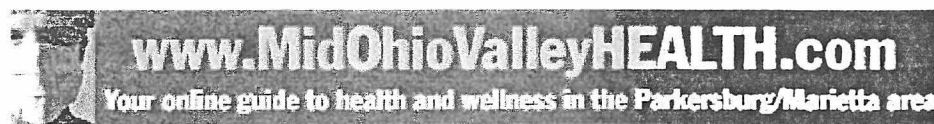
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